critical digest

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This Week

Arabian Nights-Jones Beach 6/23. Guy Lombardo's second year of musical extravaganza with Laurits Melchior, Ralph Herbert, Helena Scott and Hope Holiday. Disappearing Water Ballet and Elephants included.

La Ronde Circle in Square 6/27. New English translation of Arthur Schnitzler play by Eric Bentley with Felice Orlando and Betty Miller. Staged by Jose Quintero.

Future Dates

Stage Struck-Bijou 7/7 ...Skin of Our Teeth 8/15 Fred Waring Pleasure Time 1955-Ziegfeld 8/8.

Fall Dates

D'Oyly Carte- Shubert 9/27...Maurice Chevalier-Playhouse 9/28...A View of Bridge-Fulton 9/29... Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter 10/1...Diary of A Young Girl-10/5...Joyce Grenfel Requests the Pleasure-Bijou 10/10...Shepard's King-Yiddish Art Theatre-Downtown National 10/10 ...The Fourth Son-Phoenix 10/11...The Lark-10/12... Red Roses for Me 10/20... No Time for Comedy 10/20 ...Comedia Francaise-Broadway 10/25...Chalk Garden-Barrymore 10/26.

Janus-Plymouth 11/1... Pipe Dream-Shubert 11/30 ...Tiger At Gate-1/56.

C.D. Summer Issues

C.D. will cover tryouts of new plays in Eastern summer theatres, plus other special features.

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

The Trial- Provincetown Playhouse 6/14. Theatre 12 production of the Franz Kafka novel adapted by Aaron Fine and Bert Greene drew pro verdicts from Post and World Telegram & Sun reviewers, and con verdicts from Times, Herald Tribune and Journal American reviewers. Group, praises Herridge, Post, have succeeded to a remarkable degree in trying to reproduce the unbearable nightmare world of Kafka without making it a trial also for the audience. As theatre piece, she added, it has the mental impact of a trip hammer. Except for fact that some minor members of the cast were weak, she approved of entire production. Hudson, WT&S, applauded group for fine job in tackling a most difficult and challenging piece of work. Admitting the acting was on a high level, Gelb, Times, panned proceedings as merely providing conversation for the avant garde set, but doubted if it was valid theatre. Piece becomes rigid, declamatory, hopelessly two dimensional game of words, vetoes Kerr, Herald Tribune. In addition he noted that most of the actors have adopted high, hollow, overly rapid delivery which makes them all look like a collection of talkative mannequins. Pretentious and irritating summed up McClain, Journal American.

Summer Tryouts Reviewed

The Fairly Fortune-Bucks County, Pa.- has sporadic moments of power and kinetic drive, rates Dash, Women's Wear, but Theodore St. John play has several major faults in structure which bring play close to melodramatic frame. Cast includes Victor Jory, Michael Wager, Frank Merlin and Byron Saunders. If play corrects faults, critics thinks it has fair chance as Broadway entry.

Summer Tryout Dates

Cyprienne-Norwich, Conn 6/27...Palm Tree in Rose Garden Pocono 7/18...Blue Denim-Westport 7/18...The Reluctant Flute-Hyde Park 7/19...Two Fingers of Pride-Ogunquit 8/8...Mighty Man Is He-Falmouth 8/15...A View From Bridge-Falmouth 8/22 ...Devil's A Stranger-Rehoth Beach, Del 8/22.

John Golden 1875-1955

John Golden, who would have been 81 in two weeks, died in his sleep at his 20 acre estate in Bayside, NY. He produced 150 plays, wrote the lyrics for many songs (including the best seller "Poor Butterfly", was the founding father of Equity Library Theatre and many other theatre groups. Show people, as well as other people, will long remember his many benefactions in behalf of the theatre and indivuals, points out Times obit. He will be missed, but not forgotten, editorial sums up. The theatre has lost a pillar, and the public has lost a producer who never pandered to low or evil tastes, adds Journal American editorial. His epitaph should read, paper suggests--He was a good man.

The Skin of Our Teeth ANTA production with Helen Hayes, Mary Martin, George Abbott and Florence Reed will have the longest pre-Broadway "tryout" in current legit history. Troupe under direction of Alan Schneider will present "Salute to France" performances in Paris June 28-July 3. Then they will play for two weeks in Washington, D.C. starting July 18, and two weeks in Chicago. NY opening is scheduled for August 15. Following the limited NY run the group will rehearse a week for the NBC TV 2 hour telecast on Sept 11.

Plays

Three for Tonight and Tea and Sympathy closed... Victor Borge's Comedy in Music will be closed from July 2 to Aug 29 for vacation, box office will remain open...Lunatics and Lovers has extended run 3 weeks past June 25...Nine O Clock Revue will be presented in October by David Brooks and Ted Thurston with a 9 PM curtain. Thurber's "Mr. Preble" will be one of sketches...Delilah, new musical with Carol Channing, will be directed by Robert Alton...Affair of Honor will be presented by Theatre Guild and Theatre 200, Inc, the recently organized production company headed by Edward Specter. ...The Chalk Garden will open at Barrymore Oct 26 with Gladys Cooper starred in new Enid Bagnold play...Fanny tickets for New Year's Eve on sale.

Players

George Jean Nathan, Journal American weekly critic, age 72, and actress Julie Haydon, age 44, will marry June 20 aboard Grace ship Santa Rosa...Andora Hogin, Nancy Lynch and Julienne Marie have joined Plain and Fancy...Robert Duke replaced Hurd Hatfield, Anastasia. ..Louis Sheaffer, former Brooklyn Eagle critic, is press agent for Berkshire, Mass, Playhouse...Orson Bean signed for Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter...Moss Hart will stage musical version of Pygmalion...Lew Kesler staged entire production of Almost Crazy, with Christopher Hewitt staging the sketches only.

Summer Playhouses

Lakewood Theatre, Barnsville, Pa. trying 7 and 9 PM performances Fridays instead of midweek matinees...Brattle Theatre, Cambridge, Mass, will have a club-bar open from 5 PM to 1 AM. 2000 membership cards have already been issued. On Fridays shows will be presented at 6 30 PM and 9 PM...Cyprienne will debut June 27 at Norwich, Conn with Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof co-starred...Two Fingers of Pride is new name of Vincent Longm's The Geep...Eric Bentley's version of Gogol's The Gamblers will be tested at Chestertown, NY with Morris Carnovsky starred.

Other Broadways

West Coast Plain and Fancy cast to be headed by Alex Smith and Craig Stevens. Show opens Aug 29 at L.A. Philharmonic Auditorium...Bus Stop second company which opens in August in Central City, Colo, will feature Peggy Ann Garner and Glenn Anders. Albert Salmi will take 6 months leave of absence from NY cast to tour.

Award Department

Charles Coburn awarded scroll by National Theatre Arts Council on 78th birthday...Thomas Hammond and Thomas Bell joint winners of Gilbert Gabriel Award of Williams College for their contributions to theatre.

Theatre Ad Notes

Theatre Tour ad explained how Alex Cohen hired blonde gal who asked questions to answer questions. Headline was "Sorry, No poodles."

Theatre Vaudeville Notes

New Palace show features Marion Harris, daughter of well known English singer.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

Rosalind Russell will star in NBC TV show produced by Pajama Game producers Brisson-Griffith-Prince due in Oct...NY policeman on "64,000$ Question" TV up to $32,000 by answering weekly questions on Shakespeare...Ethel Waters on CBS TV "Climax" June 30 in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Dance."

GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

PRAISE OF AMATEURS...Hooray for the amateur actors cheers McHarry,News. Such folk work hard and enjoy themselves, they are no problem to the police and they take no bread from legitimate mouths, he summed up. Common devotion of all amateur theatre workers is their love of drama and the allied arts. Reporter guesses there are at least 50,000 amateur actors in the country, but would like to know the exact number.

COLUMN TIPS...Several NY producers keep professional money-raisers on salary in Houston to land angels, reports Kilgallen...Josh Logan draws $9200 royalities weekly from Fanny, notes Sylvester.

SUMMER CHORES...Methods of keeping NY drama critics in condition during the summer months detailed by McClain,Journal American. They can go to London and pan the British company of the American shows he didn't like, or he can re-visit the NY shows he didn't like first time around. If they are careful they can also pick some bad summer plays or some worse actors to attack. Or he can write "con" notices of some of the classics he don't like.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...Certain chain of forthcoming events will prove that the comments of the critics and the criterion by which they examined Safari killed the show, producer Alan Abel writes to Variety...Summer theatre employment is responsible for the survival of the average actor, reminds a C.D. reader.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Movie scouts are more alert and enterprising than theatre scouts in recognizing and signing summer theatre talent, points out Coleman, Mirror... The human knee is simply ugly and has no more place on any romantic musical stage than a wen on the nose, pans Nathan, Journal American.

THEATRE TV FUTURE...Following the June 22 CBS TV Three for Tonight showing the revue will re-open in Hollywood. Torre, Herald Tribune, believes it will be interesting to find out how the TV presentation affects box office sales there. If it proves detrimental, it's very possible that theatre die-hards will use this incident to further their loud arguments against the marriage of TV and the stage. NY Plymouth box office this week heard complaints from customers who demanded to know why they were made to shell out good money for something that's about to be seen on TV for free.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Off Broadway audiences will accept avant garde plays if they are produced well, Julie Bovasso,co-producer and co-star The Maids, told Herridge,Post. Cocteau's The Typewriter is the next play on the new group's schedule.

PROS & CONS BY TMK.

The Trial, presented by Theatre 12 at Provincetown Playhouse,is one of the best Off Broadway productions of the season. Though the downtown full-dress drama loses some of the impact of the earlier YMHA concert reading,the entire cast and production heads must be lauded for turning in a first rate job.

Two summer theatres are trying 7 PM and 9 PM Friday performances. Why don't a Broadway producer try this in fall???

"The critics must be crazy" is often the cry of a theatre goer who finds himself enjoying a play the reviewers panned. Actually critics, like every other free citizen, are entitled to their opinion. It is really "the producers who are crazy" if they close a play on the mere sayso of the critics. If funds are available all forms of advertising and promotion should be tried to inform the public what the play is about. Then if they stay away,blame the people,not the critics.

OFF BROADWAY

La Ronde, which opens at Circle in Square June 27, was first presented in US in March 1923 at the Belasco Theatre before a privately invited male audience.

No Exit, produced and directed by Alan Saunders opens June 24 at 4th St Playhouse, 83 E 4th. William Harahan, Nan Wymar and M F Robel make up the entire cast.

Young Davy Crockett, a play in 3 acts by Marian De Pew Ostrander will be presented June 25-26 at Barbizon Plaza Theatre as the first presentation of American Children's Theatre, Inc.

Phoenix Theatre will open season Oct 11 with The Fourth Son, a fantasy drama by Aldyth Morris based on a Chinese Legend. Jack Landau will direct.

Four Flights, a new play by John Patrick Hayes, being presented weekends by Studio 6, Ltd, at 1126 6th Ave. Admission free...Pantomime Art Theatre presented ten sketches at Carnegie Recital Hall, June 18, with Lionel Shepard as producer-director.

YIDDISH THEATRE

Molly Picon will appear in a series of plays to be produced by her husband, Jacob Kalich, at Palace Theatre, Brooklyn. Series will open in early October...Zvee Scooler signed for featured role in Highway Robbery which opens season for Heritage Group Players in mid-October at President Theatre.

THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

"Comden and Green" Heritage disc featuring Betty Comden and Adolph Green singing tunes from their shows was okayed by Variety for the showtune fan. Duo still have the bistro bounce and an exuberance that adds up to a lot of fun.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS

"How Not to Write A Play" by Herald Tribune drama critic Walter Kerr continues to add pro reviews to its critical file. Watts, Post, rates it a notable and provocative addition to the polemics of the theatre. Prescott, Times, adds book makes good reading for anyone interested in theatre, pungent, pointed and controversial.

THEATRE TV COMMENTS

"The Chocolate Soldier" presented on NBC TV with Eddie Albert, Earl Wrightson and Rise Stevens was enjoyed by Trau, Variety. But Van Horne, World Telegram-Sun, thought that except for colorful costumes seen only by color TV set viewers, it emerged as a pretty silly piece.

"Barretts of Wimpole Street" on CBS TV Front Row Center with Geraldine Fitzgerald and Robert Doulas was panned by Shanley, Times, as uneven and listless. It lacked vigor and excitement.

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